

# Factsheet

## National Animal Identification System (NAIS)

### What is NAIS?

NAIS is a modern, streamlined information system that helps animal health officials respond quickly and effectively to disease outbreaks or animal health events in the United States. NAIS—a State-Federal-Industry partnership—is designed to:

- Increase the United States' disease response capabilities
- Limit the spread of animal diseases
- Minimize animal losses and economic impact
- Protect producers' livelihoods
- Maintain market access

### Why is NAIS important?

In order to respond quickly and effectively to an animal disease event (whether it is a single incident or a full scale outbreak), animal health officials need to know which animals are involved, where they are located, when they were there, and what other animals might have been exposed. NAIS provides standards for identifying both animals and locations, and when coupled with electronic resources to retrieve the data, enhances animal disease traceability. The sooner reliable data are available, the sooner affected animals can be located, appropriate response measures can be established, and disease spread can be halted.

### Does the ability to trace diseases need improvement?

Today, many disease response and animal traceback efforts are time-consuming, costly, and difficult. Tracing infected animals often involves an exhaustive search of available records and documents—most of which are paper-based—as well as interviews with producers, market operators, harvest facility owners/operators, veterinarians, and others involved with the care and management of the animal(s) in question. Additionally, these records are not consistent in nature or standardized on a national level. And while many animals may possess some form of identification (ear tag, tattoo, brand, etc.), those identification methods provide only minimal information that could be used to successfully trace a disease to its source.

Disease tracing involves the use of modern technologies to collect, store, and make available data that animal health officials need to conduct animal disease surveillance, eradication, and control programs. A reliable and cost-effective information system equips officials to trace the movement of diseased animals and identify other potentially exposed animals in order to contain disease. Fundamental to this system is accurate and retrievable identification of as many animals as possible.



### Did you know?

- Participation in State/Federal Cooperative disease programs has decreased as diseases are eradicated. For example, less than 12 percent of the U.S. calf crop is officially identified using brucellosis vaccination ear tags.
- An animal can be identified multiple times for multiple purposes yet still not be fully traceable. This is caused when identification methods are not universal, and the systems can't "talk" to each other.

## ***How do I participate in NAIS?***

**1**

### **Obtain a Premises Identification Number (PIN).**

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To obtain a PIN, contact your State, Territorial, or Tribal NAIS Administrator. Participants may request a PIN by completing the application form online or by mailing or faxing the form to their State, Territorial, or Tribal NAIS contact. Information on NAIS contacts in each State is available at the following link:  
[http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/contact\\_us/directories.shtml](http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/contact_us/directories.shtml).

**2**

### **Identify your animals.**

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After you have obtained a PIN, you can participate in the second component of NAIS—animal identification. The only requirement is that you use NAIS-approved devices/tags. These devices feature 15-digit Animal Identification Numbers (AINs) that are unique to each animal. Group/lot Identification Numbers (GINs) are used in species that typically move through the production chain as a group. A list of authorized devices and manufacturers is available at the following link:  
[http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/animal\\_id/ain\\_mngt\\_sys.shtml](http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/animal_id/ain_mngt_sys.shtml).

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### **Report certain high-risk animal movements.**

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You may elect to report certain types of animal movements to State or privately owned animal tracking databases (ATDs). USDA realizes that attempting to record all animal movements is not practical, nor is it the intent of NAIS. Rather, the focus of NAIS is on the type of movement and its potential impact on spreading a disease. A list of the types of movements that should be reported can be found in the *NAIS User Guide*, available at:  
<http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/naislibrary/userguide.shtml>.  
A list of available ATDs may be found at:  
[http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/naislibrary/documents/guidelines/NAIS\\_Interim\\_ATD\\_Listing.pdf](http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/naislibrary/documents/guidelines/NAIS_Interim_ATD_Listing.pdf).

## **Additional Information**

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For more information about NAIS, contact:

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